(b) An inspection Agency approved by the Grain Board of Iraq had inspected the Cargo prior to shipment and declared the wheat consignment fit for human consumption and conforming to the quality specifications of the Iraqi Order.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The consignments were reportedly diverted by the exporters to other destinations in Middle East where the buyers accepted the same.

Cut in Allotment of Sugar to States

1978. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to cut down allotment of sugar supply to the States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any proposal to entrust procurement and distribution of food items to the State Governments; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The issue of decentralization of procurement of foodgrains was discussed in the Chief Ministers Conference on 21.5.2001 and in the meeting of the Standing Committee of Union Ministers and Chief Ministers of Food Management and Agriculture Exports on 6.7.2001. The States of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, J&K, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Gujarat and Assam expressed their inability to adopt the scheme of decentralized procurement due to various reasons such as lack of funds, infrastructure, trained manpower etc. The States of Karnataka, Goa, Himachal Pradesh and Chattisgarh expressed that the scheme could be adopted after suitable modalities are worked out. In the first meeting of the Standing Committee held on 6.7.2001, it was clarified that the scheme would not be imposed on any State Government. The scheme of decentralized procurement has already been adopted by

Uttar Pradesh for wheat and rice, by West Bengal for rice and by Madhya Pradesh for wheat.

Supply of Foodgrains to Targeted Groups

1979. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the steps taken by Government to ensure that the supplies from the Public Distribution System reach the targeted groups including the people living below poverty line and those under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana families;

(b) whether those living in the drought-hit areas in the country would also be covered by the scheme of PDS; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Public Distribution System (PDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of Central and the State Governments. The Central Government has taken the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation at subsidised prices of certain essential items, *viz.*, rice, wheat, sugar, imported edible oils and kerosene. The responsibility of distribution to the consumer through the network of FPSs rests with the State Government. The Government of India has advised the State Governments to substantially involve the Gram Panchayats in the supervision and monitoring of the Public Distribution System, especially at the fair price shop level, as a measure of social audit. The involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of the PDS at the grass root level will make the system transparent and accountable and thereby help in ensuring that the supplies from PDS reach the targeted groups including people living below poverty line and the poorest of poor "Antyodaya" families. The guidelines issued by the Government of India for Antyodaya Anna Yojana provide that the allocation of foodgrains to the States will be linked to the receipt of utilisation certificates from them to the effect that the foodgrains already allocated have actually reached the Antyodaya families.